

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00149R000400460001-0
SPRINGFIELD (O.) NEWS

Circ.: e. 28,739
S. 38,162

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Date: DEC 21 1955

Government Witness Tells Of 'Cellar Trial' By Reds

(CLEVELAND, Dec. 21.—(AP)—

A key witness in the government's case against 11 alleged Ohio Communist party leaders was to undergo further cross-examination today in Federal Court.

A defense attorney yesterday moved that the witness, John Lautner, be cited for contempt of court following a heated verbal exchange between the two.

The motion, made by Fred H. Mandel after the jury had been sent home 10 minutes early, was denied by Judge Charles J. McNamee. He said the attorney and witness at the time "were somewhat heated."

Mandel had confronted Lautner with testimony he gave early in 1952 at the trial of 14 Communist leaders in Los Angeles when Lautner shouted:

"You are cheating there!" He implied that Mandel read only part of an answer Lautner had given at the Los Angeles trial.

In moving for the contempt citation, Mandel told the judge he should act "to uphold the dignity of this court and as a deterrent to witnesses who may be tempted to commit the same misconduct."

Judge McNamee reminded the attorney that he already had in-

structed the jury to disregard Lautner's remark.

Mandel is one of seven court appointees named to defend the alleged Communist leaders who are charged with conspiracy to teach and advocate violent overthrow of the U. S. government.

Over defense objections, Lautner earlier yesterday retold his account of a "cellar" trial he was given by six men here in January, 1950, shortly before he was expelled from the Communist Party. He said Joseph Brandt, one of those now on trial, was among the group.

He said he was lured here from New York on the pretext of a new party assignment. The men forced him to strip naked and searched his clothing, he continued.

Lautner said he was accused of being an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency, a "supersecret" government organization.

A tape-recording machine was hooked up and a lie detector was in the room, the witness said.

"Joe Brandt got behind me and hit me on the head and told me to put my mouth nearer the tape recorder," Lautner said. "I was branded a liar. I was told I was not getting out of that place until I confessed. I told them it was a terrible mistake."

Throughout the proceedings, he continued, one of the men stood behind all the time, holding a revolver.

Lautner said he was released after telling the men he had written a letter informing his mother in Youngstown that he was going to be in Cleveland for a few days.

He said he read of his expulsion from the Communist Party in the Daily Worker when he later returned to New York.

Lautner has testified at similar trials all over the country as an expert on Communist doctrine because of his having served as a high party security official.

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